

FOREIGN ARCHITECTURAL AND ARTISTICAL INTELLIGENCE.

Public Amusements considered as an Educational Agency.—On account of the intention of the Belgian Government to take the initiative in the important item of public improvement, a Brussels paper makes the following judicious remarks:—"A zoological garden in the Brussels capital is a thing very much wanted, but we would not like it to become an affair of shares and a private speculation, and, therefore, it ought to be open gratuitously to the public at certain fixed days. However vague the instruction in natural history, which is obtained by the simple viewing of the collections of a zoological garden, still some utility is attached thereto; and we are convinced that nothing which will lead the masses towards the obtaining of instruction ought to be neglected. Analogous to this are theatres, games, concerts, public pageants, and festivals. The importance of these agencies on the public mind has been recognised by the law-givers and philanthropists of all times. A wise commonwealth has, therefore, not only to school a people, to procure them a cheap existence, to enact good hygienic laws, it will also amuse (recreate) the people. Public spectacles are by no means a subject so trifling or futile as is generally thought."

Paris: Schooling Working Men.—We perceive that the Paris press is not behind in taking up this important subject. Amongst the several works lately published, that of M. Audigance "On the Duties and Rights of the Workers" occupies an honourable place. Our author, who has chosen the form of dialogues, treats also of the employment of children in manufactories. Notices on savings banks, public baths, sanitary measures, &c., fill up the book.

Public Works at Tiflis, Caucasus.—The governor of the Caucasian provinces has caused the construction of a magnificent bridge over the river Civa, near Redut-Kale. Conjointly a theatre has been erected at Tiflis by a German architect, in the Arabic style, the interior of which is ornamented in a superior manner, with the busts of great tragedians of olden and modern time—Euripides, Shakespeare, Goethe, &c. Some time ago an especial manufactory for architectural decoration was established at Tiflis by Prince Woronzoff, for supplying the many new structures with appropriate ornamentation. Another prince, M. Eristoff, is editing a monthly periodical in the Russian language, where art and literature are also represented.

A New Museum, Rome.—The plan for a new archaeological museum has been sanctioned by Government, and the necessary funds allotted. Besides the collection which has existed for centuries past in the Vatican Library, consisting of monuments of the first Christian era, another will be established in the Lateran, where the sepulchral monuments discovered in the catacombs, and other similar antiquities of stone and marble, will be deposited. The researches made of late years in the Roman sotterranes, have yielded most of these interesting antiquarian relics.

Medieval Restoration on the Rhine.—Most persons journeying along this river will recollect the old parochial church of Bilk, near Düsseldorf. It is one of the oldest buildings on the Nether Rhine, consecrated by St. Swibertus in the twelfth century. Having fallen into decay, it will be again restored according to its original character.

Art oscillating westward.—Amongst the progressing painters of the new Düsseldorf school, M. Deuse occupies a prominent place. His picture, "Washington passing the Delaware," attracted much interest, and M. Goupil, the printseller of Paris and New York, purchased it for 8,000 dollars, a work which M. Deuse had completed in less than six months. One thing led to the other: the artist made a smaller copy to be engraved at Paris, while he emigrated to the States, where print-shops and art-enterprises are making energetic progress.

Enlargement and Erection of Prisons in Prussia.—All the penitentiary establishments of Prussia are so overcrowded, that an enlarge-

ment and increase has become absolutely necessary. At Ratibor and Münster the works have been carried on for some time, and the new buildings are near their completion. At Wartenburg also a plan for a new building has been made. Besides these new prisons, those of Halle and Werder will be considerably increased.

Paris School of Design, Architecture, &c.—The distribution of prizes of the *Ecole Nationale Spéciale de Dessin, de Mathématiques, d'Architecture, et de Sculpture*, has taken place in the amphitheatre of the Lycéeum Louis le Grand. The following were the prizes given, and their recipients:—Architecture, no first prize; second, H. Raskin. Stone-cutting: E. Train, C. Tiné. Carpentry: C. Tiné. Architectural drawing: H. Raskin, E. Train. Drawing after architectural plates: A. Dunet, V. Henry. Many other prizes were given in ornamentation, composition, sketches after round figures, &c., showing the broad basis of this useful establishment.

ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS.

WHEN people are indisposed to help themselves, they often call out loudly for the assistance of others: the waggoner called upon Jupiter, and it seems architects prefer calling upon Parliament to putting their own shoulders to the work which has to be done. If all men were of the opinion that they, as individuals, could not abstain from a given practice, however reprehensible, because others followed it, I fear little progress would be made towards a higher civilisation. Whenever Parliamentary assistance is sought, I hope it will be for something more than the simple regulation of architectural competitions; and considering how gross is the ignorance which prevails upon the position which architects ought to hold, I think members of the profession may be not unreasonably expected to withhold their countenance from a custom which tends to foster the contempt in which architects are held.

The advocates of competitions seem to overlook the fact that the present system is utterly irreconcilable with the usage the profession wish to maintain.

When people about to build can have prepared for their special use an almost endless number of designs without any extra cost, is it surprising that the public foster the present system of competitions under which they appear to have all to win and nothing to lose? Is it not much more surprising that the profession should be willing to work for the merest chance of obtaining the same amount of pay as if the work were put into their hands without any risk at all? People in their charges generally make an allowance for contingencies—where the business is certain charging less than when it is more speculative: but architects make no distinction whatever in their expectations of emolument, whether they work for a *bona fide* commission, or for the chance of obtaining one. Is this reconcilable with ordinary prudence and forethought?

Seeing that the public in theory gain so much from competitions, they ought to remunerate each competitor for his time and trouble, and then one most unjust feature of the present system would be abolished. Had they to pay for every design submitted to them, they would restrict their applications, and would be much more likely maturely to consider the designs submitted than at present; and as people in general value most highly that which they have to pay for, they will think better of the profession—esteem it more highly than they do now. If, in addition to this, the instructions to competitors could be established to constitute a legal contract, in default of adhering to which the advertisers could be mulcted in damages (as I think they ought to be), building committees would feel the responsibilities of their office. As long as the rack is not recognised by the legal practice of this country, I do not think that an Act of Parliament requiring reasons to be assigned for the judgment come to could be worked; but any jury might be instructed so far as to judge from evidence how far the committee had adhered to, or violated their own conditions.

But, in truth, competitions, though a very great evil, are only a part of the injurious effects resulting from the present position of architects; effects which are nearly as prejudicial to the public as they are to the profession. After giving the subject much consideration, I am convinced that it is necessary to incorporate architects, in a manner similar to that by which both branches of the medical and legal professions are embodied; and that this is required as much for the benefit of the public as it is by the profession.

The public are just as ignorant and liable to be imposed upon in architecture as in medicine: whilst the restrictions imposed by the Metropolitan and Local Building Acts are derogatory to a properly qualified architect.

It is much to be regretted that the Institute have not given this subject more mature and practical consideration; but I am convinced that it will force itself upon the attention of the profession, and that ultimately some incorporation will be adopted. JOSEPH BOULT.

THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETIES AND BRIDGEWATER CHURCH.

WE have received a letter from the architect under whose direction Bridgewater Church is being restored, in reply to Mr. Warre's note.

In it the writer says:—"A fair and just criticism of the works of a professional man cannot reasonably be objected to; but to speak of them in *offensive language*, and to denounce them, moreover, as 'desecrations' before a public body of men known to give, at the least, a theoretical study to the subject, and before the world also apparently, at all events emanating from so influential a Society, is a mode of proceeding that cannot but be unreservedly condemned as *injurious and unjustifiable*, if it may not also be considered 'presumptuous' in the unprofessional man."

Mr. Warre will possibly be so good as to give your readers, Mr. Editor, the advantage in this case of his 'forty years' experience, and explain to them first the real causes of complaint against the architect, and then describe the beauties and the value of those portions removed, as well as the opinions entertained by himself and his Society as to the uses to which they were anciently applied when in the possession of the Romanists; for I should wish this controversy to be in some degree useful, which may be the case, if he would take the opportunity of giving you such an account as shall serve for a record of all that has been removed by the hand of the 'Renovator' from this fine old church.

Do believe, Mr. Editor, that I have some veneration for the beautiful, and can also appreciate the wonderful talent so profusely displayed in the works of our forefathers, and that I do not esteem my own work before the good in theirs.

What I claim both for myself and the profession is this,—that when called upon to restore an ancient building, we shall be allowed the exercise of our judgment in discriminating between the good and the bad: and if a necessity exist for rebuilding any portion, and that portion is in itself, or does only contain, an excrescence, that we shall not be compelled to reproduce the abomination simply because it is old or curious, or existed in a certain position previously, but that we shall be at liberty to call to our aid the whole powers of our mind in taking advantage of every opportunity that presents itself for improving, correcting, or refining the composition so as to produce, as far as circumstances will permit, a beautiful and harmonious whole.

The time is come in which we must bestir and extricate ourselves from this bondage, and the degraded position into which we have been thrust, by throwing off the leading-strings which have so long checked and cramped our labours and strivings after the beautiful. W. H. BAKER.

We cannot admit that, when an architect is called in "to restore an ancient building," he is to set about "improving, correcting, and refining the composition." This is what the "beautifiers" of the last century did, and a pretty mess they made of it.